

READ AND THEN CIRCULATE.

“Smoke Not.”

AN ESSAY,

By MISS E. S. C.,

TO WHOM A PRIZE HAS BEEN AWARDED BY A
COMMITTEE OF THE

BRITISH ANTI-TOBACCO SOCIETY.

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PREFACE.

This little tract is republished from the London edition, by an association of philanthropic young ladies, who recognize the Christian obligation "to do good and to communicate." They are stimulated to this act of disinterested beneficence by the sincere hope that its more diffusive circulation may be the means of placing it into the hands of many young persons, who, by the perusal of its salutary warnings, may derive the inestimable benefit of being rescued from enslavement to a loathsome and repulsive HABIT. The practice of smoking has gained so extensive a prevalence as to have already become one of the characteristic vices of the young men of our times. It is an unnecessary, enervating and deleterious habit. It undermines and destroys health, and is a wasteful extravagance, oppugnant to every principle of wise and virtuous economy.

The motto of Maximillian the emperor, deserves the adoption of every youthful aspirant. "*Keep thyself within compass, and have an eye always to the end of thy life and actions.*"

A Prize Essay,

ON THE EVILS ARISING FROM THE HABIT OF SMOKING.

WE are often told that life is a field of battle, an arduous, toilsome conflict, requiring the full strain of every energy to conquer the difficulties by which it is surrounded. Life is real, life is earnest; we must work faithfully and unremittingly while our day lasts, that when called upon to give an account of our stewardship, we may do it with joy and not with grief. In order, then, to perform the work required of us, and to meet the world, its trials and difficulties, with a bold front and undaunted perseverance, we should be jealous of our strength, both bodily and mental, guard it as a sacred gift committed to us for the performance of our duties, and firmly resist all those influences which would weaken and depress it. At a time like the present, when every facility is afforded for young men to improve their understandings and fill their minds with every kind of knowledge whereby they may become such men as we may honor and admire; we should wonder, did we not know the subtle power of evil, to see opportunities for improvement so neglected, and to witness the health, talents, strength, and energy, of the present generation of young men *overshadowed by one small cloud*, truly not larger than a man's hand, yet powerful enough to darken all their mental vision, and damp their warm aspirings after high and holy aims.

The influence of Tobacco, however used, greatly tends to weaken and enervate the body, and to render the mind cloudy, abstracted, and unequal to great exertion, quick perception, and sound and vigorous judgment. Those, who deliberately inhale this noxious poison, are not putting their talents out to the best advantage, nor are they faithful servants of their Heavenly Master. So much might be said in condemnation of the impure and baneful practice of smoking, that an attempt to grasp the whole subject, would far exceed the limits of this simple Essay. The following arguments, under a few general heads, must therefore suffice :—

PHYSICAL EVILS.

In the first place, what is Tobacco? Why it is the greatest Thief that ever palmed itself upon an unsuspecting people, robbing the body of its elasticity and vigour, and the mind of its power and brightness; and it does all this in so insinuating a manner, that the victim is totally unconscious of his loss. But what is Tobacco chemically and botanically? It is the leaf of a pale and stately plant of the Solanaceous or deadly night-shade family. In Tobacco there exists a most noxious poison. The deadly nicotine possesses such fatal power, that a few drops would destroy the healthiest human life, whilst a very small portion would suffice to poison a middle-sized dog. Professor Johnstone says in his "Chemistry of Common Life:"—"The Hottentots are said to kill snakes "by putting a drop of nicotine on their tongues. Under its "influence the reptiles die as instantaneously, as if killed by an "electric shock. It appears to act in nearly the same way as "prussic acid." Pereira says:—"Nicotina is an energetic "poison, almost equalling in activity hydrocyanic acid." Nor can smokers defend themselves with the idea that the dose is too small to affect them, for listen to Professor Johnstone again:—"A hundred pounds of the dry Tobacco leaf yields "about seven pounds of nicotine. In smoking a hundred grains "of Tobacco, therefore, say a quarter of an ounce, there may be "drawn into the mouth two grains or more of the most subtle "of all known poisons;" and this dose, frequently repeated, cannot fail to injure the strongest constitution. Nor is the deadly nicotine the only baneful quality existing in Tobacco. While the weed is undergoing the process of combustion, many other hurtful agents are engendered and carried with the smoke into the mouth and lungs, and from thence are distributed with the blood over the whole body. Such, for example, as carbonate of ammonia, nicotiana, empyreumatic oil, soot, paraffin, and many gases, which are impure and hurtful. The introduction of all these deleterious agents into the system cannot fail to produce injurious effects on the general health and constitution; indeed, so well known were the enervating effects of Tobacco, even to the Indians themselves, that, as King James observes, "In the market they will offer no "price for slave to be sold, whom they find to be a great "Tobacco taker." When Tobacco was first introduced into Europe as a medical drug, it was for some time used by Physicians as a sedative; but in such instances the greatest caution was necessary, for being an exceedingly depressing

opiate, it acts too much upon the brain and heart to be used with safety. The empyreumatic oil, which is generated by the action of fire, has a debilitating and often fatal action on the brain. Sir B. Brodie says, when speaking of the effects of vegetable poisons, "The empyreumatic oil of Tobacco occasions death by destroying the functions of the brain
 "its effects are similar to those of alcohol, the juice of aconite, and the essential oil of almonds." We sometimes hear about the nourishment of Tobacco, but can good and evil be so strangely blended? The confirmed smoker often eats but little, and *that* little with a dainty appetite; but it would be folly to say that he is stronger and better for such abstinence from food. His sallow and dull complexion, his feverish lips, and eyes shaded with a look of weariness and exhaustion, testify against him. These are ever indications of unsound and feeble health. The smoker, under this feeling of faintness and langour, accompanied by thirst, caused by the smoke on the throat and palate, yields to the craving for strong drink, and thus adds another deadly fire to the one already consuming him. The affinity between smoke and drink is so general, that on the shoulders of Jean Nicotin much of the latter may be laid. Dr. Clarke observes, "In some places the same word expresses both; thus, '*peend*,' in the Bengalee language, signifies to drink and to smoke." Smoking is said by some to assist digestion, but the extreme waste of saliva, occasioned by smoking, is in itself sufficient to weaken the digestive powers. Many experienced Physicians have proved that the use of Tobacco weakens the internal functions, instead of assisting them, and we have only to look upon those nations who are the most addicted to the use of Tobacco to see the truth and force of these opinions. Germany, which may be considered the great Tobacco furnace of the age, is affected by her reeking atmosphere in many ways. The tendency of Germans to disease of the lungs, may be traced to their incredible passion for smoking, and their principal physiologists compute that out of twenty deaths of men between eighteen and twenty-five, ten originate in the waste of the constitution by smoking. So frequently is vision impaired by the constant use of Tobacco, that spectacles may be said to be as much a part and parcel of a German, as a hat is of an Englishman.

It is a well attested fact that the Americans wear themselves out by the *use* of Tobacco. Finally, on this head, Oriental nations, who addict themselves to smoking, are characterised, both bodily and mentally, by a feebleness and

indolence, which renders them an easy prey to their more vigorous neighbours. Does it not, then, appear a species of unprecedented madness, that man should prefer this stupifying poisonous smoke to the fresh pure air of heaven?

FINANCIAL EVILS.

It is by no means a light accusation to bring against smoking, that it is a constant and serious drain upon the resources of young men, thereby not only leading them into extravagance, but causing that extravagance to assume a selfish and degrading character. If every young gentleman would take the trouble of adding up the amount he spends in the year for Tobacco, according to his own particular consumption, and calculate how many useful articles and instructive books might have been purchased for the money, to say nothing of the good which he might have done to others or to himself, by the saving effected upon his own health, and if he still thinks that he has laid his money out to the best advantage, he is very much to be pitied. For Tobacco upwards of £8,000,000 (in dollars 40,000,000) are annually spent in Great Britain alone.

MENTAL EVILS.

The ill effect of Tobacco on the mind is as certain as it is deplorable. The mind, being the main-spring of the body, it must influence every action of a man through life. There are few boys whose pulse has not quickened as they have read of great achievements in the glowing pages of history or biography, while they resolved to be imitators of those they admired. There are few young men first boldly stepping into the arena of life, who have not longed to "leave their names enshrined far above time or fate;" and, confident in the strength and buoyancy of youth, have vowed that they would conquer or die in their struggles with the world: and how is it that so many have died?—have sunk lower and lower with every difficulty, and finished a useless existence in some poor and wretched hovel, or in the parish workhouse? Is life so very difficult a passage, that so few should rise, and conquer, and end their days in peace and honour? Ah! no indeed! the fault does not lie here, but in the victim himself, who yielded to the treacherous influence of narcotics; thus listlessness and reverie took the place of prompt and spirited action, and all his brightest visions faded "like the baseless

fabric of a vision." The sage, the scholar, the ideal painter, and sometimes even the poet, assert that the magic fumes of Tobacco stimulate reflection, imagination, and meditative thought. Now we know that its action upon the brain is of a highly stupifying and intoxicating character; in that character it would be likely to conjure up images of a strange and fanciful cast, but nothing more,—the beauty of truth, the beauty of nature, all fade into dreamy unrealities, and false estimates of the world and its actions; false ideas and doctrines, are all that could be expected from a brain thus continually acted upon by "the most subtle of all known poisons." We may take for example the literature, science, and theological discussions of Germany, which are characterised by a dreamy, vague, and speculative cast,* are unsuited to the present bustling age, and produce no beneficial action on the minds of men. The habit of smoking has, in itself, a degrading and sensualizing influence over the mind. The smoker, too, is generally, of that temper commonly denominated as "short," or "touchy," and is inclined to be passionate, selfish, and self-willed, impatient of control, and fond of domineering over others. These are attributes of character to be shunned by every good and sensible man.

MORAL EVILS.

The habit of smoking debases the moral, social, and religious character. We have shewn how smoking soon leads to drinking. These combined habits inevitably lead to low and bad companionship, and we know from the highest authority "that evil communications corrupt good manners." If a lad taking his first cigar in his mouth could, by the aid of its magic smoke, gaze into the future and behold the list of evils entailed upon him by that simple act, he would throw his cigar from him in horror. But he perseveres in his habit, the evils come upon him one by one, and he knows not how it is that he is changed from the peace, and hope, and energy, of his promising manhood. In proportion as the habits of the smoker and drinker become confirmed and imperative, his social character sinks in the scale of purity. He can no longer enjoy the quiet and refined employments and intercourse of the home circle, in which business alternates with recreation, and the sweets of labour with those of repose: all is now dull and insipid with him; he delights in the exciting companionship of the Tap Room, the Casino, the

* Behold in Tobacco the source of German Transcendentalism.

Billiard Room, the Card Table, and the Race Course, and forgets, among the gay associates, his former good and lofty intentions. But the last and greatest evil which smoking can effect upon the young is, its begetting a spirit of irreligion. The writer does not wish to say that every smoker is an irreligious man, but it must be contended that smoking leads to irreligion. If there is one thing more than another that requires a firm, pure mind, it is the practice of vital Christianity. We know that the gospel exhorts to all purity, charity, and industry; but the influence of smoking is directly antagonistic to all these qualifications. Our best, our holiest thoughts ought to be turned to Him "who daily loadeth us with benefits."

Finally, let us in a few words enumerate the reasons, why the young should not smoke. In the first place, smoking undermines that health and strength, which youths require to carry them firmly and comfortably through life. Secondly; it leads to a serious waste of money which might be more usefully employed, and to a constant drain upon the resources of young men; it acts also as a check upon their liberality and power of doing good. Thirdly; it weakens and stupifies the brain, rendering it unfit for, and averse to, great activity, or sound and regular study, and causing reverie and speculation to take the place of active energy. Fourthly; it degrades the moral, social, and religious character, it betrays into bad society, and by its low and sensual tendency, it takes the mind from religious duties. Surely these are reasons sufficient, if well considered, to deter any one who still possesses one spark of self-esteem and self-control, from yielding himself up to the influence of this insinuating and grovelling habit. Youth, being the morning of life, the spring-time of existence, is the best time for storing up that strength of principle and that knowledge of things which are to be made available for the future. It is the time for studying our fellow-creatures, their virtues, faults, and frailties. Above all, it is the time for remembering the Creator and turning the heart to Him before the world has obtained dominion over it. Let all those, who in their youth would lay up a precious store of information for the future, who would build a good foundation for their after life, who hope to live and die, loved and honoured, avoid the debasing influence of Tobacco, and its accompaniment, Strong Drink, as they would avoid moral death, disgrace, dishonour.

